

CIRCULAR INNOVATION: BIG BAGS IN A CLOSED LOOP

A customer who becomes your supplier, and vice versa: that is the dream of circular value chains. Such a closed loop is closer to reality than we think, however, as RAFF Plastics and LC Packaging have developed a fully closed loop recycling system for big bags together, based on the common drive to make a difference in the sector through sustainable innovation.

**SIMON LAUWERS,
KEY ACCOUNT MANAGER**



Since 2008, RAFF Plastics has been purchasing some 60,000 big bags a year from LC Packaging, to deliver its granulates

“WE NEED PIONEERS LIKE RAFF PLASTICS TO ACHIEVE THE SUSTAINABILITY AMBITIONS IN OUR SECTOR.”



**LOTTE MASTWIJK,
HEAD OF SUSTAINABILITY**

to customers. “For some time, Caroline and Christophe had indicated that they were interested in purchasing big bags made from recycled materials, as part of their sustainability mission,” explains Simon Lauwers of LC Packaging.

VAN LC PACKAGING

CLOSED LOOP

RAFF Plastics also recycles big bags itself to turn them into new raw materials, and the idea soon arose to collaborate with LC Packaging to create a completely closed loop for big bag recycling.

This is exemplary of the good cooperation between the two companies, fuelled by their shared sustainability ambitions. »

LC PACKAGING PRODUCES BIG BAGS.

RAFF Plastics purchases big bags from them to transport recycled granules.



© photo: LC Packaging

WHAT IS A BIG BAG?

A big bag, or Flexible Intermediate Bulk Container (FIBC), is a large, sturdy bag made of woven polypropylene, intended for storing and transporting large quantities of dry, liquid or granular materials. These bags can hold 1,000 to 1,500 kg and are widely used in the agricultural, chemical and construction industries. A filled big bag is 1.5 to 1.9 metres high and fits on a Europallet.



The results have been impressive: the first container of 7,000 to 8,000 recycled big bags was delivered to RAFF Plastics in early 2024. LC Packaging manufactured them with raw materials sourced from RAFF Plastics, which had been recycled from bags that came from... LC Packaging.

In the meantime, LC Packaging has achieved European QA-CER certification for the use of recycled polypropylene (rPP) in big bags, qualifying the company as an approved rPP-PCR supplier.

“As a supplier we can offer added value to customers like RAFF Plastics, as it enables them to comply with European sustainability standards,” explains Simon Lauwers. “Although the cost of big bags made from PCR is still higher at the moment, the certificate entitles customers to compensation and there is an obvious positive environmental impact due to circularity as wastage and related CO₂ emissions are avoided.”

HIGH QUALITY

“Not many raw materials suppliers can provide recycled materials of such high quality as RAFF Plastics,” explains Lotte Mastwijk, Head of Sustainability at LC Packaging.

“They can make a big difference for us in the long run, given that one of our goals is for 80% of our sales to come from circular packaging by 2030.” This is how RAFF Plastics became not only a customer, but also a supplier of LC Packaging.

THE CIRCLE IS COMPLETE... AND EXPANDING

But that’s not where the story ends, as both RAFF Plastics and LC Packaging intend to expand the project further and produce as many big bags as possible in the closed loop system. “Moreover, we are using it as a test case for our other customers to show that a closed loop is really achievable. We need pioneers like RAFF Plastics to help achieve this,” Lotte and Simon conclude.

EUROPEAN SUBSIDIES

For the big bag project, RAFF Plastics can count on funding under the European Union’s Recovery and Resilience Facility (RRF)..



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NextGenerationEU

TRENDS IMPACT AWARD

The big bag project was nominated for the Trends Impact Award 2023 in the Circular Economy category.



RECYCLING
10.000 TONNES OF
BIG BAGS
PER YEAR

RAFF PLASTICS PROCESSES USED BIG BAGS

into recycled polypropylene (rPP) and supplies it as a raw material to LC Packaging.

